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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 HARARE 000251

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ZI](#) [ZANU](#) [PF](#)

SUBJECT: DINOSAURS AND DISSENTERS - TAKE TWO

Classified By: AMBASSADOR CHRISTOPHER DELL FOR REASON 1.4 (B) AND (D).

Summary

1. (C) The Ambassador met February 14 with the Minister of State for Indigenisation and Empowerment, J.T. Tungamirai, a Politburo member and reputedly close to President Mugabe, as well as separately with two of the ZANU-PF Members of Parliament who lost in the party primaries two weeks ago. The two meetings once more framed the debate within the ruling party over the way forward. Tungamirai, though advertised as a moderate, went to extreme lengths to defend the party line. The discussion reached a low point when he responded to the Ambassador's criticism of President Mugabe's intemperate, racially offensive, remarks about the Secretary with the remark that &she started it.8 By

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contrast, the two soon to be former MPs were open to discussion, acknowledged mistakes on the part of the ruling party and said the opposition could pull a surprise in the elections given ZANU-PF's failure to deliver stability and prosperity. Both planned to remain loyal to ZANU-PF but both were very critical of the party's leadership, including President Mugabe. End Summary.

Tungamirai: ZANU Insider; ZANU Moderate?

2. (C) Tungamirai said he had fought in the liberation war and that after independence he had had served in the Army for a year and then switched to the Air Force, which he ultimately headed with a rank of Air Marshal. He retired from the military in 1992 and joined ZANU-PF's administrative structure. He headed the party's youth wing for a number of years. His election to Parliament last year in a by-election in Gutu North, in Masvingo province, was his first foray into electoral politics.

Minister with Small Portfolio

3. (C) Tungamirai said he was appointed as a Minister a year ago and is reviving the Ministry. To date, he said he had ten employees. The Ministry's main purpose was to promote &indigenous8 ownership. His near-term goal was to achieve 50 percent indigenous ownership in all areas of the economy with an immediate priority on tourism, mining, manufacturing and the petroleum sector. He said this was to be achieved through &negotiation.8 The Ministry would try to find willing buyers and willing sellers. The former would need to demonstrate sufficient interest, have adequate capital, and a socially conscious business plan. The Ministry had yet to publish guidelines, which required passage of legislation in Parliament. He hoped to be able to do so by the middle of this year.

Politics as War

4. (C) Tungamirai said he would stand again this year and anticipated no problems with his own re-election, despite economic problems in his constituency, the foremost of which was continuing drought. In that regard, he noted that the party's goal with respect to land reform was to increase production. Tungamirai said ZANU-PF was committed to a non-violent election. He acknowledged that there had been violence in the past, especially in the 2002 Presidential election. He predicted ZANU would win these elections handily. The 2000 party program had been largely achieved and the 2005 program would appeal to voters, especially in the rural areas where the party was strongest. Asked about ZANU-PF's target for the election, he said he was a military man, and that in politics as in war, the goal was to destroy your opponent) ZANU-PF's goal was to win all 120 seats. That said, he acknowledged that a more realistic result would be a two-thirds majority.

5. (C) Tungamirai denied any significant turmoil within the party, noting that periodically the party &sheds its skin8 to emerge stronger than ever. Tungamirai suggested Information Minister Moyo and his adherents were trying to split the party at the instigation of the West, but they

would be unsuccessful as others had been unsuccessful in the past. The Ambassador asked whether the anti-Blair campaign had any real resonance with the people. Tungamirai acknowledged that most rural voters probably didn't know who Blair was, but these people would vote ZANU-PF anyway, and the message would have resonance with educated urban voters.

Relations with the West

16. (C) Despite the anti-Blair campaign, Tungamirai denied that ZANU-PF sought confrontation with the West. He attributed the bad relations of the past few years to Britain's decision to renege on its Lancaster House commitments to provide the funds to allow land redistribution to go forward. Asserting that no colonial power wants its colonies to succeed, he claimed the U.K. is intentionally undermining Zimbabwe. In that regard, he criticized the white Zimbabwean owner of the country's largest fertilizer company, Sable, for deliberately trying to destroy Zimbabwe's agricultural productivity. The Ambassador asked, incredulously, if Tungamirai believed this individual, having had his farm seized, was now deliberately destroying his remaining business in order to get revenge. He's a clever man, responded Tungamirai. (N.B. In fact, we understand that the owner of Sable is a Black Zimbabwean and that the GOZ has a major interest in the company. Moreover, the primary cause of fertilizer shortages is the lack of foreign exchange -- caused by misguided GOZ economic policies -- as well as profiteering by well-connected individuals able to obtain excessive amounts of fertilizer at subsidized prices, which they can then sell for five times as much on the street.)

17. (C) The Ambassador noted that every time relations between the U.S. and Zimbabwe came up in discussions with the GOZ he received a history lesson with a focus on land reform. The U.S. understood the social justice argument. However, we took issue with how land reform was managed and the disastrous effect it had had on Zimbabwe's economy. He added that Zimbabwe was becoming a bad political example for the region. Zambia and Malawi, for instance, were considering an NGO bill of their own, a piece of legislation we regarded as repressive and inspired by Information Minister Jonathon Moyo's extremism. The U.S. was more interested in discussing Zimbabwe's future than in endless debates on its history and we remain committed to helping Zimbabwe reverse the effects of its bad policy choices of the past few years.

18. (C) Tungamirai responded that the GOZ was very concerned about the Secretary's recent outpost of tyranny statement. Zimbabwe felt threatened by the U.S. and its policy of regime change. The Ambassador said President Mugabe's vitriolic and insulting public comments about the Secretary would only make things worse. Tungamirai responded

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that, She started it. The Ambassador said it was important to try to depersonalize our disagreements. He added that the U.S. cares about the people of Zimbabwe, and that was why we gave USD 20 million a year to fight HIV/AIDs and why we had given USD 100 million in food aid over the past few years, and why we would be prepared to help again if need be. What concerned us most in Zimbabwe was that the trend in this country was so radically in the wrong direction. Once a positive model for Africa, Zimbabwe was now a showcase for what not to do.

ZANU & Losers: True Moderates

19. (C) The Ambassador met the same day with two ZANU-PF MPS, Victor Chitongo, MP for Murehwa in Mashonaland East, and Gibson Munyoro, MP for Makoni West in Manicaland. Both had lost internal ZANU-PF primaries for their seats, and both had lost them to sitting Ministers: in Munyoro's case, Agriculture Minister Made; and in Chitongo's case, Health and Child Welfare Minister Parirenyatwa.

Electoral Prospects

10. (C) Chitongo said this was becoming a pattern in ZANU-PF, replacing a popular sitting MP, especially an outspoken or independent one, with a Minister or ZANU-PF insider who had never before been elected to public office. And it was putting the seats at risk and improving the opposition's chances of pulling off an upset. ZANU-PF was already in more trouble than it realized because of the sad state of affairs within the country. The Ambassador asked if that were the case why ZANU-PF was running an anti-Blair campaign instead of focusing on ways to improve conditions for average Zimbabweans. Munyoro agreed that this was a foolish approach that would have little resonance with average voters, many of

whom, especially in rural areas, would have no idea who Blair was.

11. (C) Chitongo told the Ambassador that for ZANU-PF success in the elections would be winning 60 of the 120 contested seats. In addition to the thirty MPs the President appointed, this would give ZANU-PF the two-thirds majority it needed to amend the constitution and allow President Mugabe to dictate his succession. By contrast, for the MDC &success8 would be winning 60 or more seats itself and thus forcing ZANU-PF to negotiate constitutional changes with the opposition.

12. (C) Chitongo predicted that if ZANU-PF won a two-thirds majority, Mugabe would step into a &comfortable8 retirement within the next two and a half years (i.e. before the 2008 presidential elections). However, if they failed to win 60 seats, he said there would be a major upheaval in the party. He added that Mugabe &will not be a Chiluba8 referring to the former president of Zambia who unsuccessfully attempted to amend the constitution to allow him to run for a third term. Moreover, ZANU-PF would not consider another referendum if it did not win two-thirds in Parliament because of the risk of losing again.

Personal Plans

13. (C) Chitongo said he had many friends in the opposition Movement for Democracy (MDC) but had given no consideration to switching parties. He was loyal to ZANU-PF and would wait for his turn to come around again. President Mugabe would not last forever, he was in his 80s, and when he went so would the clique of insiders that surrounded him. He added that the party had hurt itself with the recent turmoil in its ranks, and by dismissing Moyo. Moyo had been an extremely effective Information Minister, a characterization that Munyoro seconded. Moyo,s activities in Matabeleland had done much to improve the party,s popularity in the MDC,s strongest region. Munyoro thought that if Moyo ran as an independent in Matabeleland he would stand a good chance of being elected (N.B. He would need to declare by February 18). For his part, Munyoro said he was done with electoral politics and would go back to managing his NGO, which disbursed micro credits in his native Manicaland.

&Outpost of Tyranny8

14. (C) Chitongo said he would like to see better relations between Zimbabwe and the West. In that regard, he took issue with the Secretary,s characterization of Zimbabwe as an &outpost of oyranny8 and noted that many Zimbabweans had concluded that the U.S. might be considering invading the country. The Ambassador said this was not on the table but that we were very concerned with the very negative trend in Zimbabwe) economic meltdown and political repression) and that we were also very concerned what effect this might have on the region. Munyoro asked how the U.S. could criticize Zimbabwe,s political situation when other countries in Africa were far more repressive. The Ambassador stated that Zimbabwe,s downward trend from initial success politically and economically was what concerned the U.S. Zimbabwe was both a source of instability, as evidenced by 3 million emigrants, and a negative example in a part of the world where freedom and democracy had been making headway.

15. (C) Chitongo blamed the economic meltdown on the West,s reaction to land reform. If not for land reform, the West and the IMF would be pouring investment dollars into Zimbabwe. The Ambassador took issue with that, noting that we recognized the legitimate social justice concerns behind land reform but not how it was managed: not only was the economy ruined but the land had not gone to agricultural workers but instead to party insiders. Chitongo admitted that &we8 got the land during land reform rather than the people but nonetheless criticized commercial farmers for the failures of land reform.

Comment

16. (C) These two meetings further reinforced our growing impression that ZANU-PF is starting to show deep cracks in its formerly united faade and that the elections may not be the cakewalk the ruling party expects. They also reinforced the impression that there are moderates in ZANU-PF who may one day take this party in a somewhat more democratic direction if given a chance. However, they are not the ones now calling the shots. Tungamirai had been advertised to us as an independent-minded, straight-talking former military officer and a relative moderate with whom the West could work. In the event, he came across as a party hack and yet another dinosaur that doesn,t know his days are numbered.

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